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that is not possible at the stage reached, the limitation of the principle is stated. The author lays stress on the value of conviction in the mind of the student in distinction from the ability to reproduce a proof.

Many teachers will not care to make such a general use of graphs as is suggested by Professor Hedrick; some may find it easier to develop the mechanical proficiency required for "examination-passing" with a book which devotes less space to principles and applications, but most teachers who give the new text a careful reading will find it thoughtful and thought-provoking.

ETHICAL CULTURE SCHOOL
NEW YORK CITY

WILLIAM E. STARK

Readings in English History Drawn from the Original Sources. (Intended to illustrate *A Short History of England*.) By EDWARD P. CHEYNEY. Boston: Ginn & Co., 1908. Pp. 781. \$1.80.

The need of illustrative material drawn from original sources is felt by every teacher of history. If history is to be studied as a living subject vitally related to the world of today, the student must read contemporary records of past events, not merely a historian's interpretation of them. The young learner must himself drink of the same fountain from which textbook-makers and more pretentious historians have drawn before him. This does not imply that high-school and college students should always get the facts of history from original sources—far from it. Most original sources are inaccessible to most students and even if they were accessible the task of interpreting them is, without assistance, too difficult for immature minds. The real need is rather for illustrative material to accompany the textbook or formal history. This need Mr. Cheyney has undertaken to supply in one field of study by his *Readings in English History*.

Beginning with the descriptions of England given by Caesar, Diodorus Siculus, and Tacitus, Mr. Cheyney has followed his subject down to the newspaper accounts of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. The book was intended to accompany and supplement the compiler's *Short History of England* and corresponds in sequence to that excellent textbook, but this fact in no way lessens its value to the student who uses another book or to the general reader. Mr. Cheyney has a wide and scholarly knowledge of the material from which the narrative history of England is drawn and has chosen wisely from this abundant store.

In the Saxon period of English history besides extracts from the ever-fruitful *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and Bede's *Ecclesiastical History* we find selections from Alcuin and Asser and the poem of Beowulf that vividly set forth the life and ideals of the time. When the extracts bear upon the Norman Conquest and the feudal system they show not merely military and political history and the doings of kings and courts but the everyday life of the people, the services by which they held land, their religious beliefs and superstitions, and their social customs. Illuminating bits of narrative and description are given, too long to be inserted in a textbook.

In the chapter entitled "The Period of Reform" and "The Growth of Democracy" the history teacher will rejoice to find material like the report

made in 1820 by a committee of the House of Commons upon the question of doing away with the death penalty for many crimes, selections from Parliamentary debates on the Reform Bill of 1832, and the proposed Factory Acts of 1815 and 1833, selections from statutes, extracts from memoirs and newspapers—material rarely found in school libraries but most helpful to students, young and old. A few words of introduction or explanation accompany each selection and a good index adds to the usefulness of the work.

CHICAGO NORMAL SCHOOL

DORA WELLS

Composition and Rhetoric. By CHARLES SWAIN THOMAS AND WILL DAVID HOWE. New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1909. Pp. 517.

Shall we ever have the Great American Rhetoric and Composition Book? Does it lie within the power of anyone to write such a book? Is it possible to make a textbook of that sort that will answer the local and the national requirements? Certainly many efforts have been made to produce just that sort of book, but all such efforts have failed. This failure often lies in the author's effort to spread his thick local conditions over a large area of supposed national deficiencies, thereby making a very thin coating for the wider field. Or, if he writes with a theory in mind, be it psychological or pedagogical, he is too likely to neglect the practical side of the business. If he has the practical side well in hand he is likely to fail in making the matter pleasing. From whatever point he approaches his subject he is almost sure to be unbalanced by the neglect of some essential quality that is not apparent in his limited experience. Should he be so fortunate as to have experienced the difficulties of teaching the mother tongue to pupils whose linguistic inheritance comes from the Germans, the Scandinavians, the Dutch, and the Russians, to name only a few nationalities, he would assuredly be less confident that he has the master idea to solve the intricacies of our American English. Indeed, it is asking too much of any teacher or textbook-maker to set forth a national system of teaching English. And it is also asking too much to expect anyone to write the *Great Book*. Let us be satisfied if the succession of books on rhetoric and composition adds a mite of information or suggestion to the solution of this vexed question.

But were we asked to name any one book that comes, in our opinion, to the nearest solution of this national question, the nearest to being the greatest book on rhetoric and composition, we should not hesitate to name Thomas and Howe's *Composition and Rhetoric*. This praise, we know, will sound like wild and whirling words in many ears. We stand ready to hear a cry of protest on every side; we expect to hear accusations of every sort from everybody who is particularly interested in some other book. But we are expressing only an individual opinion and a personal judgment. And for that opinion and that judgment we are glad to give our reasons.

To be perfectly frank we must say that we have watched Mr. Thomas' work in the Shortridge High School, Indianapolis, for nearly a decade. Furthermore, our knowledge of his work has been so intimate that we have seen his practice grow into a theory—a very mild and a very simple theory—and his theory grow into a little manuscript and his manuscript grow into a good-